

Message Text

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70

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 EB-07 CIEP-01 TRSE-00 STR-04 OMB-01

CEA-01 COME-00 FRB-03 FEA-01 /098 W

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R 161800Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7700

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY OUAGDOUGOU

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 1570

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, DM, US

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATION WITH DAHOMEAN PRESIDENT

KEREKOU

REF A. STATE 243317 B. COTONOU 1521 C. USUN 4607 D. USUN 4520

1. ON OCT 10 AT MY REQUEST I HAD ONE OF MY RARE AUDIENCES
WITH PRES KEREKOU. DURING FIFTY MINUTE CONVERSFTION I GAVE HIM
IMPRESSIONS OF CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON AND MADE DE-

TAILED PRESENTATION SECRETARY'S PROPOSALS FOR RECONSTRUCTING
AND STRENGTHENING THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER (WHICH
APPEARED TO PLEASE HIM). ALSO BRIEFED HIM ON CURRENT MOOD OF
AMERICA WHICH NO INSISTED ON FAIR TREATMENT OF US AND DEMANDED
APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO UNJUSTIFIED CRITICISM OR ATTACKS

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ON IMPORTANT US INTERESTS BY OTHER GOVERNMENTS.

2. I THEN REVIEWED DAHOMEAN-INDUCED FACTORS HAVING ADVERSE EFFECT ON BILATERAL RELATIONS. KEREKOU PROFESSED IGNORANCE OF THEM AND INSINUATED USG DID NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT BASIS FOR CONCERN. ARREST AND HARASSMENT OF OUR PERSONNEL AND PROGRAMS HE REGARDED AS OF LITTLE SIGNIFICANCE AND BY-PRODUCTS OF NORMAL WORKINGS OF SOVEREIGNTY. RE LACK OF PROGRESS IN MAKING INDEMNIFICATION FOR NATIONALIZED ASSETS OF BANKS AND OIL COMPANIES, HE EXPRESSED ANNOYANCE THAT THE SUBJECT SHOULD BE RAISED, ASSERTED (UNTRULY) THAT SETTLEMENTS HAD ALREADY BEEN MADE WITH ALL FOREIGN BANKS, CALLED FOR PATIENCE ON PART OF MOBIL AND TEXACO, AND POINTED TO "ASSURANCE" HIS GOVT HAD GIVEN LAST DEC TO INDEMNIFY THEM AND OTHER OIL COMPANIES. KEREKOU EXPRESSED IGNORANCE OF ADJIBADE'S SEPT 25 UNGA ATTACK ON US (REF D) AND ADDED THAT USG SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT HIS GOVT WAS EVEN-HANDED AND FAIR IN TREATMENT OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS, WHETHER SOCIALIST OR CAPITALIST. FOR EXAMPLE DAHOMEY WAS "NOT ONLY AGAINST AMERICAN IMPERIALISM AND THAT OF FRENCH, PORTUGUESE, ETC. BUT WOULD ALSO OPPOSE SOVIET AND CHINESE IMPERIALISM."

3. SUMMING UP I SAID NET EFFECT OF AFOREMENTIONED FACTORS ON DAHOMEY-AMERICAN RELATIONS WAS ADVERSE. I REMINDED HIM THAT HIS GOVT'S NATIONALIZATION MEASURES HAD WIPED OUT OUR SUBSTANTIVE INTERESTS IN DAHOMEY, EXCEPT FOR THE UNPAID INDEMNIFICATION TO SOME OF OUR PRIVATE COMPANIES. TRADE WAS SMALL, THOUGH WE HOPED IT WOULD GROW. THE COUNTRY HAD NO STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE. IT HAD NOTHING WE WANTED. DAHOMEY SELDOM VOTED WITH THE US IN INTERNATIONAL FORA AND FREQUENTLY ATTACKED US. THE ONLY MOTIVATION I COULD SEE FOR OUR CURRENT GENEROUS ASSISTANCE WAS COMPASSION FOR A BROTHER PEOPLE WHICH, I ASSURED HIM, WAS INDEED SIGNIFICANT IN THE EYES OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND GOVT. USG BELIEVED "COOPERATION" (THE PREFERRED LOCAL TERM FOR AID) FOR DEVELOPMENT WAS PRACTICABLE WITH A COUNTRY HAVING DIFFERENT IDEOLOGY, SO LONG AS IT WAS BASED ON MUTUAL FRIENDSHIP, MUTUAL CONFIDENCE, MUTUAL RESPECT, AND DIGNITY. US WAS PREPARED TO DO ITS PART SINCERELY, AND TO EVERY COUNTRY WISHING OUR FRIENDSHIP WE EXTENDED OUR HAND. AND I ORDERED MINE TO HIM. IN TAKING IT HE BEGGED ME TO "BRING DAHOMEY MORE PROJECTS", FOR EXAMPLE AN OIL REFINERY, A NEW ROAD TO

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PORGA, ETC., ETC. AND HE SAID "WE WANT DOLLARS... IT DOES NOT MATTER WHETHER THEY ARE AMERICAN, RUSSIAN OR CHINESE.

4. COMMENT: KEREKOU, LESS RUDE TO ME THAN HE USUALLY IS TO WESTERN AMBASSADORS, EVEN SMILED AT BEGINNING AND END. INCREASE IN HIS SELF-CONFIDENCE, AS COMPARED WITH THREE MONTHS AGO, WAS STRIKING. NO DOUBT THIS IS DUE TO SENSE OF SECURITY RESULTING FROM HIS SUCCESSFUL SUPPRESSION OF POPULAR INSUR-

ECTION IN JUNE FOLLOWING HIS MURDER OF MIN OF INTERIOR AIKPE.
SINCE HE APPARENTLY HAD NOTHING HE WANTED TO SAY TO ME,
I DID THE TALKING EXCEPT FOR HIS REACTIONS HERE AND THERE,
WHICH WERE SOMETIMES A BIT LOUD. DIFFICULT TO ASSESS WHETHER
MY REMARKS WILL HAVE A SALUTARY EFFECT ON HIM. HIS UNDER-
STANDING OF POLITICS, ECONOMICS, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MECHANICS
OF AID PROGRAMS, ETC., IS AT BEST SKIMPY, AND HE HAS DIFFICULTY
ARTICULATING THOUGHTS. BUT HE HAS A CERTAIN PRIMITIVE CUNNING,
AND HE MAY SEE SOME OF THE LIGHT.

5. REF A INSTRUCTIONS NOT RECEIVED UNTIL OCT 14. FOR MOST PART
THEY WERE CARRIED OUT IN MY TALK WITH PRESIDENT. IF AND WHEN
I GET TO SEE FONMIN I WILL COVER SAME GROUND, DEAL MORE
THOROUGHLY WITH KOREAN QUESTION, AND GO INTO SOME OTHER
QUESTIONS AS WELL.

6. DETAILS BY AIRGRAM.
ENGLE

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